

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the first full paragraph of page 3 of the Specification with the following paragraph. The amendments to the first full paragraph set forth below are indicated by strikethrough and underlining.

By way of further illustration, in a monetary dispute between a first party and a second party, as to which the parties agree to a specific monetary settlement, the ~~first~~ second party communicates terms of and participants in the monetary settlement to a third party, the third party assigns a unique identifying designator to the settlement terms and participants, the third party makes the settlement terms available for access by the second party over an electronic network by use of the designator and the designator is communicated to the ~~second~~ first party, the ~~second~~ first party uses the designator to electronically access the settlement terms, the ~~second~~ first party electronically transmits either a settlement terms acceptance communication or a settlement terms refusal communication to the third party, and the third party, if the communication is a refusal communication, notifies the ~~first~~ second party of the refusal, and, if the communication is an acceptance communication, provides the ~~second~~ first party with the option of consummating the settlement by receiving a lump sum payment of the specific amount of the settlement or consummating the settlement by receiving vouchers for at least a portion of the settlement amount, the vouchers having a face value which, when combined with any lump sum payment made in consummating the settlement, exceeds the settlement amount.

Please replace the second full paragraph of page 4 of the Specification (which continues to page 5) with the following paragraph. The amendments to the second full paragraph set forth below are indicated by strikethrough and underlining.

In FIG. 1, it is assumed that an event occurs which results in a first party, in the position of a claimant or a claimant's representative, asserting a claim and a second party, in the position of an entity against which the claim is asserted or its representative. In the first step, illustrated in Block 101, the first party and the second party reach an agreement as to a proposed monetary settlement of the claim, including a release thereof, at least as to the second party. In the second

step, illustrated in Block 102, the second party communicates the settlement terms to a third party, preferably but not necessarily not a real party in interest to the dispute, i.e., an independent third party. In the third step, illustrated in Block 103, the third party assigns a unique designator to the settlement terms and participants. In the fourth step, illustrated in Block 104, the third party makes the settlement terms and the unique designator available to the first second party as, for example by access through a quasi-public network such as the Internet, by use by the first second party of the unique designator assigned by the third party to the settlement terms.

Please replace the first full paragraph of page 5 of the Specification with the following paragraph. The amendments to the first full paragraph set forth below are indicated by strikethrough and underlining.

In the fifth step, illustrated in Block 105, the unique designator is communicated to the first party. Such communication is made by or through either the third party or the second party, and preferably is made by a method with at least some security, such as a direct telephone call, an encrypted email message, a facsimile transmission or other direct written delivery, to avoid ready access to the terms by others not involved in the dispute. For example, the third party may provide the designator to the second party, who, in turn, telephonically transmits it to the ~~second~~ first party. In the sixth step, illustrated in Block 106, the first party accesses the settlement terms electronically by using the designator, so that the security of the terms is preserved, as access to the terms is denied to those not possessing the unique designator information. Preferably after accessing the settlement terms, the first party is provided with an option to receive at least a portion of the monetary settlement in the form of vouchers which can be redeemed for goods or services, although, if desired, this option can be provided to the first party at a prior time so as to be reflected in the settlement terms already.

Please replace the second full paragraph of page 5 (which continues to page 6) of the Specification with the following paragraph. The amendments to the second full paragraph set forth below are indicated by strikethrough and underlining.

In the seventh step, illustrated in Block 107, the first party, having considered the settlement terms accessed by using the unique designator, electronically transmits an acceptance of the terms to the third party, preferably through the same network by which access was achieved. This acceptance includes the acknowledgment of execution of a release of the claim at least as to the second party, and, if appropriate, includes the exercise of the option to receive at least a portion of the monetary settlement in the form of the vouchers. In the eighth step, illustrated in Block 108, the third party, after receiving the acceptance, funds the settlement by the transfer of funds from a source of funds designated by the second party and any required vouchers to or for the benefit of the first party. In the ninth step, illustrated in ~~Block~~ Block 109, the third party notifies the second party of acceptance of the settlement, the release of the claim, and the funding of the settlement.

Please replace the second full paragraph of page 7 of the Specification with the following paragraph. The amendments to the second full paragraph set forth below are indicated by strikethrough and underlining.

In the presently preferred embodiment of the invention, in order to induce the second party (such as an insurer) to use the services of the third party in the settlement satisfaction process, the third party (settlement processing party) agrees to be paid only \$9,500.00 by the second party, rather than the \$10,000.00 settlement amount, and no service charge for the services rendered by the third party, thus saving the second party \$500.00 based on the agreed settlement amount. In this example, the third party has received \$9,500.00 from the first party, only \$8,000.00 of which has been paid to the ~~second~~ first party and only \$1,250.00 of which has been paid to the vendor, leaving the third party with a gross profit of \$250.00 on the transaction. Obviously, this is only exemplary, and is not intended as setting any limitations of the relative contributions of the parties and the vendors to the overall financial resolution of the dispute.